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RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 000198

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, DRL  
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR AARON ROSENBERG  
USDOC FOR ITA/MAC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [CVIS](#) [GTIP](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: UAE LABOR UPDATES

Ref: Abu Dhabi 00194

11. (SBU) Summary. On February 5, Obaid Al-Zahmai Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and Yousif Al-Noor, Labor Advisor to the MOL told Econoff that the MoL was working with the Dubai executive council on a specialized labor court to facilitate the hearing of labor disputes in Abu Dhabi and other Emirates. Al-Zahmai confirmed that there are currently 80 labor inspectors adding that the MoL plans to hire an additional 208 outside contractors to work as labor inspectors "very soon" and planned on having 2000 inspectors by 2008. Neither expressed any interest in USG training or technical assistance. End summary.

12. (SBU) On February 5, Econoff met with Obaid Al-Zahmai Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and Yousif Al-Noor, Labor Advisor to the MOL to discuss recent labor updates. Al-Zahmai said that the MOL was currently consulting with the Dubai Executive Council regarding a minimum wage provision and a specialized labor court in Abu Dhabi to respond to the wishes of Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid (Mbr)UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. The MOL and the Department of Justice have established a labor court in Dubai, but have yet to establish one in Abu Dhabi or other Emirates. Currently, labor complaints are heard in the labor section of the civil courts. Al Zahmai said a specialized labor court will ensure that the cases are heard in a timely manner.

13. (SBU) Econoff asked Al Zahmai how many labor inspectors are currently employed by the MOL, noting that she had previously been told by MOL officials that there are 80 labor inspectors. Al Zahmai nodded, but quickly added that the MOL is hiring 280 inspectors "very soon" and in 2008, the MOL will have 2000 inspectors. The MOL will hire outside contractors as labor inspectors because the "Ministry is not very proficient with training in safety and health issues," said Al-Zahmai. Econoff asked Al-Zahmai and Al-Noor if the MoL would be interested in USG training or technical assistance in training inspectors or any other area at the MOL, but neither seemed interested in partnering with the USG on any kind of training or assistance.

14. (SBU) Econoff also asked Al-Zahmai and Al-Noor about the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that the UAEG recently signed with India and Pakistan and is about to sign with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Al-Noor said the MOUs state that laborers are contractual, not migrant workers and say that the labor contract must specify the length of the contract and salary of the worker. After the contract is signed by the worker and the employer, the contract must be certified by the MOL in the UAE.

15. (SBU) Although Econoff has repeatedly requested labor statistics in person and via diplomatic note, the MOL has yet to provide them. Econoff again asked Al-Zahmai and Al-Noor for the 2006 labor statistics in order to include them in the Annual Human Rights

Report. Al-Zahmai promised to provide the labor statistics.

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